Job Crafting

A Summary of Workforce Research Evidence Relevant to the Child Welfare Field

What is job crafting?

Job crafting is defined as "the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task and relational boundaries of their work" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 179). Job crafting is a proactive work behavior by which individuals adapt their job or their perceptions of their job in order to change their identity, shape their job tasks to their liking, and alter the meaning of their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Job crafting is most often conceptualized along four categories of increasing structural job resources (i.e., expanding one's autonomy or variety of resources), increasing social job resources (i.e., increasing the quality or quantity of social interactions at work for more support and feedback), increasing challenging job demands (i.e., increasing stimulation at work via trying new things or striving for more difficult goals), and decreasing hindering job demands (i.e., decreasing the scope of one's job or the effort one puts into their job to make it more manageable; Tims et al., 2012). Additionally, sometimes these four categories are condensed into two groups of promotion- or prevention-focused crafting (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019). Promotion-focused job crafting involves adding to the job and combines the prior dimensions of increasing structural job resources, social job resources, and challenging job demands, and prevention-focused job crafting involves removing aspects of the job and is the same as the prior dimension of decreasing hindering demands (Boehnlein & Baum, 2022).

Job crafting is most often measured using the Job Crafting Scale (JCS; Tims et al., 2012), which contains 21 items that assess the four dimensions of increasing structural job resources (e.g., "I try to develop myself professionally"), increasing social job resources (e.g., "I ask my supervisor to coach me"), increasing challenging job demands (e.g., "When there is not much to do at work, I see it as a chance to start new projects"), and decreasing hindering job demands (e.g., "I make sure that my work is mentally less intense").

Why is job crafting valuable?

Job crafting is valuable because when employees engage in job crafting it is associated with various behavioral and attitudinal work outcomes.

- Promotion-focused job crafting is modestly related to less burnout, whereas prevention-focused job crafting is moderately related to greater burnout (Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019).

- Increasing structural job resources is moderately associated with greater job performance and job satisfaction and is strongly related to greater organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; Boehnlein & Baum, 2022; Rudolph et al., 2017). Increasing structural job resources is modestly and negatively related to turnover intentions (Rudolph et al., 2017).

- Increasing social job resources is modestly related to greater job performance and moderately related to greater OCB and job satisfaction (Boehnlein & Baum, 2022; Rudolph et al., 2017). There is not a significant relationship between increasing social job resources and turnover intentions (Rudolph et al., 2017).

- Increasing challenging job demands is moderately associated with greater performance, OCB, and job satisfaction (Boehnlein & Baum, 2022; Rudolph et al., 2017). Increasing challenging job demands is modestly related to fewer turnover intentions (Rudolph et al., 2017).

- Decreasing hindering job demands is not significantly related to job performance or OCB (Boehnlein & Baum, 2022). Decreasing hindering job demands is modestly related to less job satisfaction and moderately related to greater turnover intentions (Rudolph et al., 2017).

What factors make individuals more likely to job craft?

Certain individuals may be more likely to partake in job crafting based on their demographics and individual differences, and certain supportive social factors in one's work environment may make a job more conducive to crafting. Specifically, adding to the job via promotion-focused job crafting tends to be more common among individuals who are high in agreeableness, extraversion, openness, and proactive personality (Rudolph et al., 2017). Conversely, those that are lower in these personality traits may be more likely to use prevention-focused crafting as a means to decrease job demands.

Additionally, promotion-focused crafting is more likely to occur when employees have coworker support and positive forms of leadership present in their workplace (e.g., leader-member exchange, transformational leadership), whereas prevention-focused crafting is unrelated to social factors in one's work environment (Wang et al., 2020). Those who have greater autonomy in their jobs are also more like to partake in promotion-focused crafting (Rudolph et al., 2017).

QIC-WD Takeaways

▶ Job crafting involves changing one's job or how one thinks about their job to better suit their individual needs.
▶ Job crafting has alternatively been conceptualized as 1) increasing structural job resources, increasing social job resources, increasing challenging job demands, and

decreasing hindering job demands; or as 2) promotion- or prevention-focused job crafting.

► Generally, increasing positive resources and demands is associated with positive work outcomes like greater performance, OCB, and job satisfaction, whereas decreasing job demands that hinder employees is associated with negative work outcomes like less job satisfaction and greater turnover intentions and burnout.

► Social support (e.g., coworker support, supportive leadership) and positive job characteristics (e.g., job autonomy) may make the workplace a more conducive place for job crafting to take place.

► Individuals may be more likely to job craft if they have a proactive personality or are high in agreeableness, openness, and extraversion.

► Researchers and practitioners seeking to measure employees' job crafting should consider using the 21-item Job Crafting Scale (Tims et al., 2012).

References

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Author(s)

Sarah Stepanek, MA, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Megan Paul, PhD, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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